



2022 VOLUME 4

December 22, 2022

# HOT Chapter Newsletter



> Heart of Texas

Advancing women  
Advancing transportation

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## BOARD MEMBERS

### PRESIDENT

**Ashley Williams**

Research Administrator  
Center for Transportation  
Research/UT Austin

### VICE PRESIDENT

**Tonia Norman**

Retired  
TxDOT

### SECRETARY

**Laura Friello, PE**

Project Manager  
Garver USA

### TREASURER

**Hong-Ting Chen**

Tolls Project Analyst  
Atkins

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

**Jackie Sartor**

Business Development Director  
Foresight



## PRESIDENT’S LETTER

It’s hard to believe that we are already at the end of 2022! It also means that my time as WTS HOT Chapter President is ending as well. As I write my last letter for the newsletter, while reflecting over the last several years, I am so honored that I had the opportunity to serve this organization. I am incredibly proud of all that this chapter has accomplished during that time.

We ended another successful series of our monthly lunches. In October we had a conversation with TxDOT Deputy Executive Director, Brandye Hendrickson, about her career path and her role at TxDOT. In November TxDOT Austin District Project Manager for the Oak Hill Parkway Design-Build Project, Christiana Astarita, shared her journey as the PM on the largest Design-Build project in Austin and she also gave an update on the OHP.

We also held two very successful networking opportunities this quarter. In late October we had our first in-person membership drive since COVID, and in December we had our annual CP/AP Member Event. Be sure to join us at our next event, our Annual Business Meeting luncheon in January, as we celebrate the success of 2022 and take a look at all of our programs and initiatives for 2023.

To the many members and friends of WTS HOT who help this chapter thrive and continue the important work of advancing women in transportation, thank you for your continued support!

To our Corporate Partners, Agency Affiliates, and donors—thank you!! We could not succeed without your support! Through our programs, networking opportunities, and scholarships we uphold WTS International’s mission to attract, sustain, connect, and advance women’s careers to strengthen the transportation industry.

To the WTS HOT Chapter Executive Board, Committee Chairs, and volunteers who donated their time to keep the Chapter running, thank you for your dedication, leadership, inspiration, and guidance.

And to Jackie and Lisa—and all our past presidents—thank you for your help and all the times you offered your leadership, mentorship, and direction!

In January we will officially transition to our new WTS HOT Chapter Board of Directors for 2023-2024 during our Annual Business meeting. Congratulations to our incoming Executive Board: President Tonia Norman, TxDOT Government Affairs Division (Retired), Vice President



# COMMITTEE CHAIRS

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Cheryl Goodgame

Senior Marketing Coordinator  
Lockwood, Andrews, & Newnam,  
Inc.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

### Janelle Carey

Transportation Planner  
HNTB

## GALA CHAIR

### Brittani Kaim

Communications Marketing  
Manager, WSP USA

## MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

### Kat Streff

Assistant Project Manager  
Kleinfelder

## MENTORING CHAIR

### Open Position

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Mary Jo Galindo

Senior Archaeologist  
Galindo Environmental Consulting,  
LLC

## PROGRAMS CHAIR

### Patty Trujillo, PE, MCE

Transportation Engineer  
Atkins

## RECOGNITIONS CHAIR

### Andrea Bryant

Transportation Project Manager  
Freese & Nichols

## REGIONAL COUNCIL

### Lisa Loftus-Otway

Research Scientist  
Center for Transportation Research  
UT Austin

## SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR

### Adeliza Ramirez, PE

Engineer  
Volkert, Inc.

## STUDENT LIAISON CHAIR

### Jamie Byers

Graduate Student  
UT Austin, Civil Engineering

## TRANSPORTATION YOU CHAIR

### Open Position

Laura Friello, Garver, Secretary Adeliza Ramirez, Volkert, Inc., and Treasurer Seles Johnson, Atkins. I am looking forward to seeing what our new Board of Directors has in store for us all!

In closing, I wish each of you a wonderful holiday season and an amazing new year. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in person next year!

Happiness and health to you all!



Ashley Williams

# NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD 2023-2024

We are excited to announce our new executive board members for 2023-2024. Congratulations on your new positions.



### President

Tonia Norman  
Government Affairs Division (Retired)  
TxDOT



### Vice President

Laura Friello, PE  
Project Manager  
Garver USA



### Secretary

Adeliza Ramirez, PE  
Engineer  
Volkert, Inc.



### Treasurer

Seles Johnson, PE  
Senior Transportation Engineer  
Atkins







## **Brandye Hendrickson - Deputy Executive Director of TxDOT**

As Deputy Executive Director of TxDOT, Brandye Hendrickson is responsible for directing the planning and administration functions of the agency, in addition to government affairs, communications, strategy and innovation, and modal programs. She began her career with the Indiana DOT as the Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources. Brandye was recruited as the first District Commissioner in Indiana. She spent seven years in that position, and it was her favorite job. It eventually led to her becoming the Commissioner of the DOT.

As the Commissioner of the DOT, Brandye was a direct report to the governor. When Governor Mike Pence decided to run for Vice President, she was appointed to serve at the FHWA. Brandye said during her time at the FHWA she was able to work on many exciting things and saw things from a national perspective.

Following her stint at FHWA Brandye went to work at AASHTO. She worked on both funding and improving diversity at the national level. While she was there, she met and began to work with previous TxDOT Executive Director James Bass.

In 2021 Brandye was given the opportunity to come to Texas and work for TxDOT and she jumped at the chance. In July of 2021 Brandye was appointed as Deputy Executive Director of TxDOT.

For Brandye, she feels like this is an amazing time in transportation, but it is also a challenging time. When she joined TxDOT they reorganized the department. They divided the organization into two functional areas. One functional area is focused on project delivery, and the other functional area,, Brandye's side, is strategy and innovation, government affairs, communications, and administration. There is also a Planning and Mobil Program Division.

Brandye talked about wrapping the last fiscal year with a \$10 billion program. She mentioned how people in the room at the luncheon helped with that program. She also said they are anticipating an \$11 billion program in 2023.

In August TxDOT updated their Unified Transportation Program to a 10-year, \$85 billion program. They are investing \$14 billion in rural areas, which is up from \$2 billion. Part of the new infrastructure bill has given TxDOT \$25 billion over the next five years, which is up about \$1 billion.

Brandye feels that Texas is fortunate to have a well-funded state program and federal money is icing on the cake. TxDOT is anticipating an increase in the transportation alternatives program and a chance to create a large projects program for communities across the state. Brandye expressed how TxDOT will need help with connecting with local communities throughout the state.

With the approval of the national electric vehicle infrastructure plan, TxDOT is going to be installing charging stations along the interstate – EV chargers. They have allocated \$408 million to partner with the private sector to build and maintain the infrastructure. She said they also want to make sure rural parts of the state aren't left out.

Brandye expressed how the IIJA is providing significantly more funding for new grant programs. They are trying to make sure all great considerations are pushed through the program. TxDOT is also trying to figure out programs and projects to partner with local communities and what makes the most sense for everyone. Brandye feels that it is a blessing and a challenge. Some of the new programs will need time to understand. TxDOT will be working closely with the FHWA to deliver on

these projects. Internally TxDOT is working hard to get projects ready.

Brandye said there is a universe of people at TxDOT making sure they can meet the \$11 billion target for 2023. Because of the need to get projects ready, TxDOT is increasing the consultant budget to \$1.35 billion to make sure they have the resources to get projects done.

The WTS HOT Chapter thanks Brandye for speaking at our luncheon.

NOVEMBER LUNCHEON



**Christiana Astarita, PE  
Project Manager, TxDOT**

Christiana Astarita provided the WTS HOT Chapter with an update on the Oak Hill Parkway project at our November luncheon meeting. She is the TxDOT Austin District Project Manager for the Oak Hill Parkway Design-Build Project. This project consists of the design and construction of approximately 6 miles of improvements along US 290 from Circle Drive to Loop 1 (MoPac) and approximately 1 mile of improvements along SH 71 West from US 290 to Silvermine Drive, including the full reconstruction of the US 290/SH 71 interchange. Christiana has 20 years of progressive engineering design, construction, and project management experience in the major metropolitan areas of Austin, Honolulu, and Las Vegas. Her experience focuses on project transportation mobility solutions.

Past roles included serving as the project manager for the SH 71 Express (also SH 71 Toll Lanes) Design-Build Project, as well as managing the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) Local Government Oversight Program for projects in construction. Christiana received her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

**ADELIZA RAMIREZ, SECRETARY 2023**

**Where did you grow up?**

*I grew up in South Texas in the small town of Hebbronville. And that’s South Texas y’all, not the valley. It’s totally different!!*

**How long have you been in Austin, and how did you end up here?** *I’ve been in Austin for 20 years when I made the decision to come to UT to study Civil Engineering. I’m the youngest of three girls and both my sisters already lived in Austin so it made the decision easy. Plus, UT has the most amazing engineering program and UT football is the best!*

**How long have you been a member of WTS? What prompted you to join and what has been your best experience so far?**

*I attended my first WTS event in 2015 with my supervisor at the time; I am a late bloomer! I’ve been an official member since 2017. I joined because the lunch topics are different than other organizations and the camaraderie. I was also impressed with the scholarship and awards that were awarded at the gala. It was amazing to see great people in the industry get recognized for their hard work. WTS truly does an amazing job at scholarship fundraising!*

**Tell us about your job...**

*I was recently promoted to Office Manager for the Volkert South Austin Office. I’ve been in this position for only a few months so I’m still settling into the job. As a former TxDOT employee, I’m a technical resource to navigating the TxDOT process, identifying key TxDOT personnel to aid in plan review for troubleshooting. I serve as QA/QC manager for various projects, most recently for CapEx North. I also lead the local municipal and developer driven projects for roadway widenings, turn lanes, and various roadway improvements.*

**What has been your favorite project thus far?**

*Favorite project so far must be CapEx North, which just let a few months ago. This was my first big project at Volkert, oh wait it’s also the biggest design-bid-build ever let in the state of Texas. It was amazing to see this big project come together during a pandemic when so many of the decision makers were working from home. This project had so many moving parts and some aspects of the project changed as the project progressed and it was also amazing to see how Volkert did this project. Not only did so many of the employees in Texas touch this project but employees from several states as well. It will be awesome to see how this project looks when it is completed.*

**What has been your favorite moment in your career?**

*My favorite moment has been seeing large overhead and ground mounted signs that I designed out in the world! Back when I worked in TxDOT I did a stint in the traffic ops section, and I was tasked with designing the first signs in the Austin District that were for the superstreet and CFIs. These were the first innovative intersections in the district so I needed to do some research on what would be best suited for the driver. Although the superstreet at SH 71 has been replaced you can still see the CFI signs in Oak Hill, at least for a little bit longer! I also designed the 6th street exit sign on NB IH 35.*

**What’s the best career advice you’ve been offered?**

*Ask questions, don’t be afraid to get dirty, and don’t forget your voice.*

**What time did you wake up this morning? Do you have a morning ritual?**

*I wake up every morning usually up by 6 am, sometimes earlier. My morning ritual consists of watching/ listening to KVUE Daybreak — I love the banter between the broadcasters. I always eat breakfast in the morning, no matter what. Usually, the breakfast includes peanut butter on toast. I do not add jelly and I do not add bananas like Elvis. As my husband Albert and I leave the house, I always tell him bye, God*





**ADELIZA RAMIREZ (CONTINUED)**

*bless you, have a great day and give him a kiss. The saying is something my mom would always tell me and it’s just something I picked up. I do something similar at night. I get in my car, and I listen to Bucky and Erin on the Horn on my drive in to catch up on sports. Again, their banter is hilarious. Didn’t realize it until now but I guess I like to start off my morning with some hilarity.*

**What’s on your bedside table?**

*I have a bedside lamp that annoys my husband, so I also have a smaller little nook light for my book when I do try to read. On the table is also said book that I try to read. I also have my remote to control my Tempur-Pedic bed. Getting a good night’s rest is essential! Also, a TV remote.*

**What can you not live without?**

*I would have to say my family, especially my husband Albert. I mean who else would annoy me!?! But not only that he makes me a better person. Oh, and peanut butter! I need my breakfast food!*

**What are you most proud of?**

*Maintaining a strong family bond, while working in a fulfilling job that serves the community.*

**What committees have you served on?**

*I’ve been the Scholarship Committee Chair since 2019 and I will be the Secretary starting in 2023. In both positions I’ve been following in the footsteps of Laura Friello, and they are large shoes to fill!*

**What would you recommend to others about joining WTS?**

*Get out of your comfort zone and join WTS! Even if you are in other professional organizations, give WTS a try, it’s a little different and it’s run entirely by women! Even if you feel like you have a strong support circle in the industry it doesn’t hurt to make the circle a little bigger.*

CP/AP AND MEMBERS ONLY EVENT

*At WTS Heart of Texas, we had a celebration wrapping up the year. We are looking forward to continuing efforts to improve mobility in Central Texas in 2023. In 2023, we hope you take a look each month to review opportunities WTS offers to connect with the transportation community. Corporate Sponsors and Agency Partners are critical to WTS’ mission to advance the transportation workforce and critical transportation projects in Central Texas. Thank you all for your contributions to our profession and community.*

WTS HEART OF TEXAS CHAPTER  
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee takes ownership of the recruitment and retention of WTS members. The committee maintains the roster of members and actively seeks to enhance the membership experience for the Heart of Texas chapter. The chapter continues to grow, contributing to the more than 6,500 members nationwide.

By identifying membership needs and developing strategies to increase membership, the committee actively ensures future growth for the chapter. Being a member of WTS Heart of Texas should be a fulfilling investment, and the committee aims to share the benefits of membership with potential new members.

Some of the responsibilities for the Membership Committee include:

- Engaging with current and prospective members
- Update the chapter roster and monitor membership statuses
- Communicating with the Board regarding membership updates
- Serving as a resource for membership questions
- Hosting membership drive events
- Distributing welcome packets to new members
- Enhancing the membership experience
- Attending monthly committee meetings

Aside from joining WTS Heart of Texas as a member, there are numerous methods to become more involved and gain the most out of your membership experience. Joining a committee, attending monthly luncheons, sponsoring the annual awards gala, and taking part in networking opportunities are all ways that you and your firm can maximize the opportunities afforded by membership in WTS. The Membership Committee is always happy to help with any membership-related questions.

Want to learn more? Contact Kat Streff at [membership@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:membership@wtshotchapter.org)



The Fall 2022 membership drive hosted by the Membership Committee at Oskar Blues Brewery featured a delicious charcuterie board and energizing conversations about the advancement of women in transportation.





## WE NEED YOU!

We have a few committees that could use some extra hands. We are currently seeking people to help out with all of our committees and we want YOU!

If you are interested please let Ashley Williams, [president@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:president@wtshotchapter.org) know!

### GET INVOLVED

Each committee plays a crucial role in supporting the functionality of the chapter. This section offers a brief overview of what our committees do to advance our mission.

#### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee takes ownership of the recruitment and retention of WTS members. The committee maintains the roster of members and actively seeks to enhance the membership experience for the HOT chapter.

Want to learn more? Contact Kat Streff at [membership@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:membership@wtshotchapter.org)

#### PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

The Programs Committee is responsible for the coordination of all chapter programming, including the monthly luncheons held throughout the year.

Want to learn more? Contact Patty Trujillo at [programs@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:programs@wtshotchapter.org)

#### GALA COMMITTEE

The Gala Committee plans and coordinates the annual Scholarship & Awards Gala which recognizes scholarship recipients as well as awards given by the chapter. The Gala celebrates our members with an evening of fun and fundraising.

Want to learn more? Contact Brittani Kaim at [gala@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:gala@wtshotchapter.org)

#### RECOGNITIONS COMMITTEE

The Recognitions Committee plays a key role in ensuring that transportation professionals and their firms are recognized for their dedication to advancing women and advancing transportation.

Want to learn more? Contact Andrea Bryant, PE at [recognitions@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:recognitions@wtshotchapter.org)

#### SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

We are able to offer scholarships in the spring and fall each year. In the spring, Friends of WTS Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors. In the fall, WTS International awards scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and junior college students as well as high school seniors. The committee maintains a database for high school and university in the region and evaluates applications for scholarship awards.

Want to learn more? Contact Adeliza Ramirez, PE, at [scholarship@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:scholarship@wtshotchapter.org)

#### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee handles information dissemination of the chapter. It is the link for all communication to members and non-members. This committee handles all outward and internal





communication through the tools of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, the quarterly chapter newsletter, and the chapter website. This committee chair works internally with other chair positions in order to successfully advertise the events of the Heart of Texas Chapter as well as the membership and Corporate Partners of the chapter.

Want to learn more? Contact Cheryl Goodgame at [communications@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:communications@wtshotchapter.org)

## **CORPORATE AND AGENCY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Corporate and Agency Partnership Committee works to secure corporate partners that will help financially support some of the chapter functions and create opportunities for events that otherwise the chapter would not be able to set up. The Committee also works to secure agency partners to help reduce the costs for public agency involvement with WTS.

Want to learn more? Contact Janelle Carey at [corporatepartnership@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:corporatepartnership@wtshotchapter.org)

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Professional Development Committee provides resources and training directly related to advancing your career in the transportation industry, often coordinating programs that provide certification maintenance credits.

Want to learn more? Contact Mary Jo Galindo at [profdev@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:profdev@wtshotchapter.org)

## **TRANSPORTATION YOU COMMITTEE**

The Transportation YOU Committee directly supports the WTS Foundation's Transportation YOU initiative, which is a hands-on, interactive, mentoring program that offers students ages 13-18 an introduction to a wide variety of transportation careers.

Want to learn more? Contact Ashley Williams at [president@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:president@wtshotchapter.org)

## **WTS Job Bank**

Did you know WTS has a Job Bank? If you are looking for work or you are a Corporate Partner who would like to post a job, the WTS Job Bank is available to you.

If you'd like to post a job opening, e-mail [communications@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:communications@wtshotchapter.org) with the relevant information and we'll post the job to our Job Bank.

Visit our Job Bank at <https://www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/heart-texas/job-bank>.



# 2023 Upcoming

## events

January	Annual Business Meeting
February	Monthly Luncheon
March	Monthly Luncheon
April	Monthly Luncheon
May	Monthly Luncheon International Conference
June	Monthly Luncheon
July	Lattes & Leadership
August	Lattes & Leadership
September	Professional Development Seminar
October	Monthly Luncheon Fall Membership Drive
November	Monthly Luncheon
December	Holiday Party
TBD	Annual Scholarship & Awards Gala & Kendra Scott Fundraiser